

# Hiawatha Corridor LRT Yards and Shops Mitigation Study

## *Cost Implication*

No increase in cost anticipated; only a 'reallocation' and focus of landscape budget.

## *Drainage*

The PE drawings indicate a more 'oval shaped' detention pond in the middle of the triangular shaped parcel along Cedar Avenue. We propose a more linear detention pond paralleling I-94 to optimize the development potential of the triangular site. It could be developed as one site or divided into smaller parcels. Our design team drainage engineers' preliminary calculations indicate an area of approximately a half acre be reserved (see attached report). We envisioned 'land-sculpting' along the slope to form a landscape feature detention pond. It could be an excellent 'artist-design team' collaboration opportunity.

## *Cost Implication*

None anticipated if design criteria is outlined before final design.

Along the southern edge of the Yards and Shops, we do not anticipate site mitigation. It is very exposed to Franklin Avenue and would require significant landscape screening if the Franklin Avenue frontage was not being anticipated as a development site. Significant efforts are being made to optimize the area available for future development. Hennepin County has proposed a narrowing of Franklin Avenue to expand the land area available for development. Intense building development along this frontage would be the most effective mitigation of the Yards and Shops and would help muffle the sound of the inevitable 'wheel squeal' at the tight curve radii in the Yards. Every effort should be made to encourage development of this site.

The western edge parallels Hiawatha Avenue, so the view of the Yards and Shops is primarily from vehicles at highway speeds. However, some screening is necessary because the maintenance building presents a 640-foot long unbroken elevation to Hiawatha Avenue. We propose an approximately four- to five-foot high berm along the access road with deciduous trees planted on top of the berm at 30'-0" on center. Once past the building, tree spacing can be opened to 50'-0" on center spacing. Trees of 2½-inch to 3-inch caliper should be planted to provide more immediate impact and to minimize vandalism and replacement. Deciduous vines should be planted at the base of the wall, to climb the wall for added texture and color.

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## *Cost Implication*

None anticipated; recommend reallocation of landscape budget and focus on this critical area.

The northern edge of the site is not as exposed to future development areas or to the immediate neighborhood due to the I-94 overpass. The continuous 'boulevard' along the eastern edge contributes the most meaningful mitigation for this exposure.

## *Cost Implication*

None anticipated.

## *Turn-around Loop Area*

The 'turn-around loop area' is a very utilitarian yard area that includes a 'maintenance of way building' and a traction power substation building that is placed on a 'grounding mat' that has limitations for landscape materials, etc. The loop area will probably store a lot of LRT materials and requires a detailed screening plan to minimize its impact on the area. The plan needs to be developed as final design proceeds to outline appropriate yard screening areas. The most effective overall mitigation concept is to continue the 'boulevard' treatment from the Franklin Station to the Cedar-Riverside Station to establish the 'eastern edge' to define and separate transit-oriented development sites from maintenance storage yard functions.

## *Cost Implication*

Fencing upgrade to 'black vinyl coated chain link.'

Pedestrian/bikeway boulevard upgrade.

Catenary Type 'A' upgrade (approximately 12 to 15).

## **Maintenance Building**

The Yards and Shops facility is one of the largest structures to be built in this area and by definition is very industrial in nature. The operations of this facility are 'introverted' by nature due to the large volume of space required to store and service the vehicles and have minimal interactions with area streets and community facilities. Therefore, it is not the ideal neighbor to attract transit oriented development.

The design and image of the Yards and Shops facility will play a critical role in the transit-oriented development potential of the area. While aesthetic decisions do not